

as to what new attempt may be made to remove the hulk. 'I'm afraid the subject will become a political football,' declared one local businessman. Over a period of 15 months the dredge had become a centre of local interest. Questions of its status were raised in the House of Commons. The vessel was not only partially obstructing the navigation channel but it lay in the path of the dredging program [by McNamara] being carried out." Nothing more was done in 1953.

HILDA was built by the Bertram Engine Works, Toronto, in 1890. She was acquired by Pyke Salvage & Navigation Company in 1929, and was sold to United Metals, of Hamilton, for scrapping, but was found to be in such bad shape that she was taken out into Lake Ontario and scuttled in October 1969. After a long career, SALVAGE PRINCE was scrapped on Toronto Drydock in 1995.

S.A. QUEEN, which began her long career as a floating grain elevator for the Montreal Harbour Commission in 1899, was rebuilt as a tug by Pyke Salvage in 1926. The QUEEN passed through the Pyke-McAllister years as a tug, but afterwards was cut down to a flat deck barge. She currently is owned by the Toronto Drydock Company.

P.W.D. NO. 117's register was officially closed on January 25, 1954. The Department of Public Works turned the wreck over to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation for sale. Interestingly, her register had been closed previously with the notation "vessel lost at the entrance of Hudson's Bay on October 22, 1938". However, this was a clerical error and her register was restored on November 21, 1938 "on account of registry closed in error". Either another Public Works dredge had been lost, or a vessel with a similar registration number had sunk.

On Friday, June 11, 1954, the "Free Press" announced the arrival of the Toronto Towing & Salvage tug H. J. DIXON at Port Stanley with a large barge, indicating an early start at another salvage attempt on P.W.D. 117. Pontoons and other salvage equipment belonging to McNamara Construction were scheduled to follow. It was stated that: "In April, a floating derrick managed to clear a mass of twisted debris from the wreck, but the boilers and machinery were not raised". The dredge hulk was now owned by McNamara, which had bought the wreck from the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation.

McNamara assembled a large fleet for its salvage attempt, including a floating drydock, a drilling barge to supply pumping power, and a 110-foot landing craft of World War II vintage - the BLACK CARRIER, complete with derrick. The fleet was brought to Port Stanley in early July, along with the McNamara tug BATCHAWANA and the chartered H. J. DIXON. Preliminary work of clearing the dredge site of silt and debris was completed in May. McNamara's engineers planned to dredge silt away from the hulk and then, using air jets, they planned to blast channels under the wreck so that steel cables could be passed through. With a combined buoyancy estimated at 1,000 tons lift, plus using forced air under the hull to break the mud suction, the engineers anticipated success. They were, however, reluctant to discuss target dates.

The arrival of the dredge ST. CLAIR and tug MARNEY M. brought the McNamara fleet up to seven vessels by the end of July. The ST. CLAIR began removing silt from around the hull, while BLACK CARRIER served as a platform for divers working on the wreck. Said "The London Free Press": "The movement of the salvage fleet creates a great deal of local and district interest, and the progress of the work is watched by a throng of spectators daily. The date for an all-out lift and pull on the long-submerged hulk is not yet announced." 26 months had passed since NO. 117 went to the bottom.

Rough weather again was a problem for the salvagers in the first weeks of August. On the 18th, the first attempt was begun with CONNIE M. towing a pontoon, capable of a 900-ton lift, out to the site and attaching it to the hulk with 3-inch cables. The dredge ST. CLAIR and barge BLACK CARRIER stood